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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN POLLSTER SHIKAKI'S VIEWS OF THE WEST  
BANK

Classified By: CG Jake Walles for reasons 1.4.b and d

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. In a September 25 meeting with USSC LTG Keith Dayton, Dr. Khalil Shikaki, Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research ([www.pcpsr.org](http://www.pcpsr.org)) assessed that West Bank Palestinians have high expectations of PA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), but low expectations of the fall international meeting. He also noted that PM Fayyad has not struck a popular chord. Shikaki said Hamas discredited itself more than commonly perceived in Gaza, and Fatah's popularity has risen as a result. END SUMMARY.

#### Popular Views of Abu Mazen, Fayyad

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¶2. (C) Khalil Shikaki told USSC LTG Dayton in a September 25 meeting that PA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) should resist old guard pressure and not empower individuals such as former PM Ahmed Qurei (Abu Ala). Shikaki said public expectations for Abu Mazen are high, but low for the fall international meeting. He said failure to deliver on peace means failure for Abu Mazen, noting that a recent survey found Marwan Barghouti is more popular than Abu Mazen.

¶3. (C) Shikaki said the popular view of PM Salam Fayyad is that he is not charismatic, a poor communicator, and without an operational support base. He said Fayyad has not emerged as a popular leader or delivered speeches to convey his values. He suggested Fayyad do more to counteract Hamas, effective public diplomacy and the PA should try to alter al-Jazeera's coverage and use U.S. and Israeli media more. Fayyad's greatest asset is the international community's support, according to Shikaki. Shikaki urged the U.S. to "build institutions. Washington can't build charismatic leaders here. They must emerge."

¶4. (C) According to Shikaki, Palestinians prioritize issues as follows: 1) law and order 2) peace with Israel, and 3) fighting corruption. This marked a reverse of several months ago when corruption topped the list.

#### Hamas and Fatah

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¶5. (C) Shikaki said only about 10-20% of the population identify with a liberal secular agenda. However, he also noted that 6% of the population shifted their loyalties from Hamas to Fatah after June 2007. He said Palestinians blame Hamas for the situation in Gaza, and many do not accept Hamas' narrative of June events. He added that Fatah will not reform itself in the near future.

#### INFLUENCE OF FAMILIES AND TRIBES

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¶6. (C) Shikaki said the impact of families and tribes on political views in the West Bank is minimal, and many families are divided over political issues. He noted,

however, in times of crisis traditional values are more important, so individuals may rely more on the family. With a weakened central government, he noted, Palestinians may use family connections to solve problems. .

WALLES